

### Crook County CattleWomen

Crook Co CattleWomen celebrated the season with a Christmas party at the Aro Restaurant. It was wonderful to see and visit with husbands and some of the less active members. Members and guests brought non-perishable beef items for food pantries in Hulett, Moorcroft, and Sundance. Minnie, Opal and Evelyn do a great job on this project. Evelyn has hunter friends from Georgia who gave \$75 to buy beef items. We distributed over one hundred beef items!



Crook County CattleWomen Opal Oudin and Evelyn Hejde delivered food containing beef to the Crook County Family Violence and Assault Services facility in Sundance

Our January meeting was short on members as we had them in Texas, Hawaii and Ari-

zona. Lucky ladies! We voted to buy \$100 in beef for "Relay For Life" held at Devils Tower May 9-10. This is for cancer patients and survivors. We are also planning a dinner for our associate members in May during Ag Week. We serve

them a beef dinner and the attendance is great. Also we will have a booth at the Health Fair. We have door prizes (beef gift cards) and hand out recipes and push the good nutrition of beef in the diet.

**Betts Seeley, President**

### Fremont County CattleWomen

Fremont County CattleWomen met on Valentines Day in Riverton. After the business meeting, an informative program on Legislative issues, the workings of the Wyoming Legislature and State issues from the Wyoming Cattlemen's meeting were presented.

Pam Buline from John Barrasso's office, former Wyo. Legislator Jim Allen from Fremont County and FCCW Legislative Rep. Martha Hellyer all presented to the group as well.

**Janet Givens, Fremont County CattleWomen**

### Weston County Cow-Belles



An FFA member helps a student learn about roping at the Weston County Ag Expo earlier in 2008.

Weston County Cow-Belles advertised beef gift cards on the local radio station with ads every day in December, in the local paper several weeks in December and in the November Chamber Newsletter.

Our Christmas party was a ladies carry-in luncheon. Instead of exchange gifts we each brought items for the local Bread office to help those who are less fortunate. January was a regular meeting but we did a "brown-bag" lunch for a change of pace.

**Nancy Darnell, Publicity**

### Sheridan County CattleWomen

I have been asked to write the column in Bobi's absence. She is enjoying sunshine and traveling around the south. I will try to cover for her, but not replace her.

This has been a busy quarter for the Sheridan County Cattlewomen. We sold quite a few of our 2008 edition cookbooks, mugs, notecards, and napkins during the holiday. We are in the process of deciding whether or not to design neckrags with brands on them, we are still gathering information. We like to have new items available each year, if possible. We are also designing new coffee mugs. So we hope to have two new items to sell for the upcoming year. We have discussed having the FFA students practice their state speeches for us at the next few meetings. By request, we would also like to get more ag info out to our ladies. One suggestion is the local Weed/Pest office to discuss the new and troubling weeds, during our meetings. It was men-

tioned that Riki cannot host the summer Blood Drives. She painstakingly makes all the goodies and hosts the blood drives every six weeks. A new member asked that we also have a bone marrow test done along with the drive. She has a very close friend who would benefit from this.

A member brought to our attention that another club has an "adopt a friend" program. It is at Providerpals.com. A person is adopted by a club to explain his or her employment for the enjoyment of others. It sounds interesting. We will continue discussion on this issue at the next meeting. We have also decided that we don't have too much on our plates for the spring, as all of our Big events take place in the fall, since we moved our Ag-Expo to fall. We had a discussion meeting about coming up with spring ideas. We have decided to raffle off some beef at the last basketball game of the year. We also would like to donate some hamburger to one of the local school



A young boy learns about milking cows at the Sheridan County Ag Expo earlier in 2008.

cooking programs for a competition and for them to learn to cook with beef, as a pilot program. If it is a success, we will go on to other county schools. We would like to be the judges or at least invited to sample their dishes!! We have made cookies again this year to be distributed on Valentine's Day to the banks that help sell the Beef cards for us year round. We really appreciate them taking the work out of eating BEEF.

**Trink Morss  
Sheridan County  
President**

### Lander Valley CattleWomen

Lander Valley CattleWomen try to stay busy. To kick off the Christmas Holiday, we held beef demonstrations at the Lander grocery stores. Mr. D's and Safeway were very generous and donated the Prime Rib for both days of our demonstrations. There were four CattleWomen who spent the time at the stores telling folks how good this meat was and what a wonderful main course it would be for their holiday meals. The reactions to our questions 'would you like to try a sample of Prime Rib' were amazing. Of course our favorite was 'Sure I would, may I have more,' but we also got some short 'No, I don't eat meat,' along with everything in between.

We were very pleased to have our local newspaper stop by to take pictures but more excellent that the pictures actually made the paper.

Lander's next big activity will be during the Wyoming State Winter Fair. Each year we have 50 pounds of beef cooked and sliced so we can serve our FAMOUS ROAST BEEF SANDWICHES. We have a secret horseradish sauce that we make to serve with the sandwiches and they are always a huge success. Lander Valley CattleWomen have been selling sandwiches for 40+/-



Lander Valley CattleWomen Debbie Anesi and Ruth Reed served samples of prime rib to shoppers at Safeway Friday afternoon as part of the organization's effort to encourage people to eat more beef.

years. Our crews have changed but our sandwiches are still a big draw for the fair. There are lots of folks who just come to get a sandwich and "we'll see you next year." This year's fair is on March 13-14 so we will be selling sandwiches on Friday and Saturday. Our goal for this year's fair is to sell at least 1600 sandwiches so we are kicking our meat order up about 50 pounds.

Come see us during the Wyoming State Winter Fair in Lander. We'd love to introduce you to one of our FAMOUS ROAST BEEF SANDWICHES!!!

**Janet Givens  
Lander Valley CattleWomen**

### Laramie Peak CattleWomen

The Laramie Peak CattleWomen seem to imitate the cows that provide our livelihood. During the winter months, we go into a maintenance mode and with approaching Spring, we get productive to earn our keep.

The group last assembled along with the Stockgrowers in late November for our annual banquet. The Stampede Steakhouse in Chugwater provided an atmosphere of a western Christmas for the sizable group. We use this occasion to announce our annual Ranch-

tributing ranch wife challenged her to learn roping and become adept at operating all the ranch machinery.

Dealing with the mundane tasks of ranch book work and being the official "go-fer", she has found the time to home school all five of her and Tyler's children. She also finds



Sheri Cundall (right) thanks her mother-in-law, Doris Cundall, for the nomination of LPCW 2008 Ranchwoman of the Year.

woman of the Year. Our 2008 winner was Sheri Cundall. Receiving a nomination from your mother-in-law is an accomplishment in itself. Sheri participated in horsemanship activities prior to marrying into an established ranching family. Her determination to become a con-

tributing ranch wife challenged her to learn roping and become adept at operating all the ranch machinery.

Events since our last communication include placing an ad in the local paper thanking all the businesses in our area for their membership in WCW.

Prior to the holidays, ads for Beef Cards were used as a suggestion for gift ideas. An additional two cases of our brand napkins were sold to the Stampede Steakhouse. We're fortunate that this business is using our napkins, which provides awareness of our organization, adds money to our coffers and is reducing our inventory.

Our January meeting had to be postponed a month due to heavy snows and high winds. Plans to serve the Reyes Bull Sale in early March are going forward. We're

putting out a call for volunteers to fill officer positions to be installed in May for a two-year term. Organizing book work for taxes and assisting in getting the 2009 crop of calves on the ground will be the major focus of the LPCW members for the near future.

**Donita Graves**

### Goshen CattleWomen

The Goshen CattleWomen, husbands and friends (60+ people) held a no-host Christmas dinner in December with Dennis Isakson playing his accordion.

It was one of the coldest days of the winter but did not dampen our attendance!! Also, in December, we ran 20 days of Beef Trivia Radio Spots.

There were four weekly winners of a \$25 beef gift certificate and one grand winner of a \$50 gift card.

The detail of our radio spots was printed in the November Beef It News.

January brought a huge cookie endeavor for our members. The Bar J Wranglers of Jackson, WY performed

at Eastern Wyoming College auditorium with western music and ranch humor as a fundraiser for our local Alzheimer unit. The CattleWomen furnished cookies and punch for the nearly 700 in attendance and also for the 45 University of Wyoming Singing Statesman group that opened the show. We gals mingled among the crowd in our red BEEF aprons (GCW were listed in all of the advertising prior to the performance) to make a presence in the community. At the February CW meeting, we put together overflowing baskets of home made goodies as a thank you to the 8 banks that sold beef gift cards in Goshen County.

**Donna Cay Heinz, Publicity Chm.**

### Natrona County Cow-Belles

Natrona County Cow-Belles participated in the Ag Expo planned by Leslie Hendry and Mary Owens for the past seventeen years. It is now a three day event and we had over 850 third graders enjoy the introduction of many ag animals and related stations. They have done an amazing job and we thank them!!! Brook Gerke, Ag in the Classroom, was a huge hit with the teachers!!

We are giving \$100 in Beef Gift Certificates to Seton House, Safe House and Poverty Resistance. For Ag Day, we are buying Beef Roasts for the Senior Citizen's Center's cook to roast. We will actually serve this meal Thurs-

day, because of Lent some eat fish on Fridays. We ran out last year so upped the donation to \$400.

March 28th is the huge Blue Envelope Health Fair. We host the hospitality room for the doctors and medical screening helpers, and also have an information booth with pamphlets and tear sheets on beef nutrition.

We are giving scholarships, beef gift cards to the first baby on Mother's and Father's Day, and are about to embark on the quest for a fund raising product such as the silk brand scarf or mug.

*Marcia Campbell  
Treasurer*

### Johnson County CattleWomen

The J. C. CattleWomen started 2009 with our Cattlemen's Bawl on Jan. 10. and had 100 people in attendance. The food was delicious and the band was good! A local potter made us a large bowl with cattle around the brim which sold at our Silent Auction for \$70!! It was a lot of fun.

A week later we served the noon meal at our first bull sale of the year. We have several more coming up in the middle of calving sea-

son. It is sometimes hard to line up enough help, but we seem to get the job done!

Our latest fund raising project is a success! Our silk scarves finally arrived at the end of November. The profit that we make from selling them goes into our scholarship fund. In our county, it is easy to get people to send us their brands to use on our projects. We have wonderful support. This last time we asked for up front money and in return we would

give them a scarf. They got a good deal in the end as the scarves ended up costing us more after waiting for two years to finally get them.

We just reordered and added some new colors. Hopefully they will continue to sell! (More details on the Feature Page)

I hope that everyone has a great year this year and a successful, warm calving season!

*Linda Matthews  
President*

### Niobrara County CattleWomen

We participated in the Lusk Christmas Bazaar on Dec 6. to promote our beef. We served three beef recipes which went over great, especially the Hot Beefy Bread Bubbles which were so very easy to make.

Then in the middle of December we had our annual Christmas party at The Pizza Place. We had a great time just enjoying each other's company and being thankful we live in our great State of Wyoming. We all got to see our new brand napkins and our cattlemen calendars we produced with our local cattlemen art work. We sold them for \$10. We all feel The Pizza Place makes the best pizza anywhere around, plus great sandwiches

and salads.

In February we present our Valentine's Sweetheart Award, which is someone who helps us promote beef. We awarded Wava Tully the honor. Wava has worked with us teaching her third grade class about Agriculture and brings them to our Ag Expo every year. Wava retired last year and we will miss working with her.

Our next project will be our Ag Expo in May. We tried it in the fall but for us it was not working. We were losing our help. We have gone back to May and everybody is all excited about it now. May we get spring rains and have great calving success!

*Sena Pearson, President*

#### Beefy Bread Bubbles

|  |                          |
|--|--------------------------|
| Loaf frozen white bread dough                          | Jar sliced dried beef    |
| 32, 1/2 in. cubes cheese (sharp Cheddar or Pepperjack) | 6 Tblspns butter, melted |
|  | 1/2 tsp garlic powder    |

Let dough thaw about 1 hour. Divide dough in half, then cut each half into 16 pieces. Cut 16 slices of dried beef in half. Fold each beef slice in half lengthwise, then roll each cheese cube in a beef slice. Shape each dough piece into a ball around a cube of beef-covered cheese. Seal well. Melt butter and garlic powder. Roll each dough ball into butter mixture and place in a Bundt pan or deep, round 1&1/2 qt casserole dish. Pour any remaining butter over dough balls. Let rise in warm place until dough doubles, about 1 hour. Bake at 375^ for 30 min. Invert and pull balls apart to serve. Serve hot. *This sounds like a lot of work but it really isn't. These are a favorite at our house.*

#### Tasty Beef Roll Ups

|                                |                             |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| One tub of Garden cream cheese | 2 (10 inch) flour tortillas |
| 1 pkg thinly sliced roast beef | 1 cup fresh washed spinach  |

Spread cream cheese evenly over tortillas. Top tortillas with spinach leaves and roast beef. Roll up tightly. Cut each tortilla into 12 slices. Secure with a toothpick. Serve immediately or chill. Makes 24 appetizers.

#### Cheese Ball

|                      |                                  |
|----------------------|----------------------------------|
| 2-8 oz. cream cheese | 2 lbs soft cheese (Velveeta box) |
| 1/4 tsp garlic salt  | 1 Tbl Worcestershire Sauce       |
| 1/4 tsp liquid smoke | 1 Tbl. onion flakes              |

3 oz. dried beef, chopped

Mix cheese at room temperature with other ingredients in a large bowl by hand. Put in plastic container to mold. Spread on favorite cracker.

### Washakie County Cow-Belles

As I write this, today is the half-way mark for winter, and what a winter it has been for the Washakie County Cow-Belles!

Here's just a thumbnail sketch of our activities:

- In October we initiated a new scholarship program where we gave \$500 to a Washakie County resident who was returning to school and who would be getting an agriculture-related degree.

- Christmas found us helping fill Christmas baskets that went to 151 needy families, along with 275 gifts! We donated \$10 beef certificates that were redeemable in our local grocery stores

- Women's Health Expo, 2009 was a new event held at the Worland Community Center Complex last Saturday. Washakie County Cow-Belles served Korean Bulgogi (Firemeat) Wraps to approximately 200 attendees. The recipe was so well received that we ran out of copies and our Nutrition and Food Safety Area Extension Educator ran it in her Northern Wyoming Daily News column, which reaches an estimated 4,600 readers. This was an awesome outreach to teach how to prepare a quick, easy beef-based recipe!

- WESTI Ag Days,

which began in 1998, kept us hopping the past two days. Yesterday we served lunch to nearly 100 attendees, followed by making dinner for about 135 Ag Appreciation people. Our very own Phyllis Hampton's husband, Sam, gave the invocation. Phyllis and Sam were recognized last year as the Ag Citizens of the Year. Other past members whose families have received this honor are Marjorie Huber (Phil); Phyllis Glanz (Bill) and Kathy Bush (whose husband is Maurice) was the first woman ever recognized. This year's recipient was Washakie County Cow-Belle Kathy Brewster and her entire family!

- The Brewster family has run a cow/calf operation north of Ten Sleep, on the Nowood River, for over fifty years and "exemplify the spirit of a hard-working Wyoming ranch family, with their dedication to the resource, the community, and the life style," according to a press release from the Ag Ambassadors that was printed in the Northern Wyoming Daily News today (February 4). The article went on to say that "The tradition continues into the fourth generation with Ashlea (their daughter) and Rod's children, Caleb, who is a 4-H Eastside Clover

Club member and Bryce who is a member of the Clover Buds, a pre-4-H group." The article concluded with "While Delanie and Ethan (grandchildren) are still too young, they will follow suit when they are old enough. These little guys and gals are already helping Grandpa Tom trail cows and he says they will be his hired hands when they get older. And, isn't that the way it should be?" We are SO proud of our Washakie County Cow-Belles and their families and the hard work they do to promote the agriculture community and maintain our rural lifestyle.

- As if the lunch, the dinner, and our Kathy and her family weren't enough recognition, today we served 130 WESTI Ag attendees their lunch. Did I mention that we also prepared the treats before the meetings, coffee and snacks between the meetings, and always kept a smile on our faces!

- We are not done yet because, on Saturday, we are scheduled to serve about 80 Guardians of the Range people their annual meeting luncheon!

- Hopefully we'll be able to take our roasters home and give them a rest! AMEN!!!

*Marlene Loudan*

The samples of food available were absolutely mouth-watering! Here is the recipe for the Washakie County CowBelle's meat dish, compliments of Dani Rice.

#### Korean Bulgogi (Firemeat) Wraps

1 1/2 - 2 pounds beef sirloin, thinly sliced (other cuts of beef would work too)  
1/3 cup soy sauce  
1/4 cup sugar  
3 1/2 tablespoons rice wine vinegar  
2 - 4 cloves crushed garlic (they used a garlic press)  
1/2 teaspoon ginger (or you could grate some fresh ginger)  
2 tablespoons sesame oil  
about 6 greens onions, thinly sliced  
1 - 2 mashed pears (or you can use canned pears or 1 can Sprite)

Combine all of the above ingredients and mix well. Marinate for 2 - 3 hours or overnight. Cook in fry pan, wok, oven or grill. Serve with rice and fresh lettuce (red leaf, green leaf, romaine or butter lettuce are best).

**NOTE:** You can also serve with a tiny dollop (or more if you love HOT) of red pepper bean paste called "Sam Jung", which you can buy in Korean or Asian grocery stores. (The CowBelles have contacted a local grocery store owner about carrying it in his store.)

A yummy side dish to this meal is Kim Chee (a Korean Classic), which is a pickled, spicy cabbage. You can buy this at a local grocery store in their produce area, near the grapes.

For a healthier meal, use brown rice instead of sticky white rice and add any kind of vegetable such as stir fried carrots, zucchini, onion, mushrooms, etc.

The Washakie County Homemakers had a delicious vegetable pizza that Dorcas Soderstrom said is in her church's first cookbook. Here's that recipe:

#### Vegetable Pizza

2 packages crescent rolls  
2 8-ounce packages cream cheese  
3/4 cup Miracle Whip  
1 package original Hidden Valley Ranch dressing mix  
1 1/2 cup broccoli, chopped into small pieces  
1 1/2 cup cauliflower, chopped into small pieces  
1 cup onions, chopped into small pieces  
2 cups tomatoes without seeds (all in bite-size pieces)  
2 cups gourmet shredded cheese  
(May use other combinations of vegetables)

Section the crescent dough on cookie sheet. Bring up sides slightly to form a crust, if desired. Bake at 400 degrees for 12 - 14 minutes. Cool completely.

Beat cream cheese, Miracle Whip and Ranch dressing mix. Mix until smooth. Spread over cooled crust. Top first with the assorted vegetables and finally the cheese. Cover and refrigerate several hours or overnight.

# FUNDRAISING IDEAS FOR YOUR COUNTY...



Our local CattleWomen and Cow-Belle groups have unique brand products for fund raisers. With this economy, many of us are looking for ways to support our Beef Promotions, our Scholarships and our giving of Beef Gift Cards to charities, raffles, Mother's and Father's Day babies, etc. We gathered up some of the products and the specific contact people and their companies for you. Some are local, and we can get ideas of what type of company we might contact in our own communities. —Your Editor

## Johnson County CattleWomen Scarf Project

Our scarves are 32.5" square. They were supposed to be 34.5" but something went wrong in China! They are plenty big.

Finding a company to handle the actual scarf printing was a problem. I found a company in Billings that would do it but it would cost us \$40 per scarf---a little steep!!

Finally someone told me about a Wyoming company, Wyoming Traders. I called and finally got things going. The man to talk to is Alan Chadwick. All the brands and whole scarf design are computer generated to size then e-mailed to China!!

You have to buy 150 min. of each color. The last order cost \$8.57 per scarf. We sell them for \$16 each. It took about five months before we received our order, reorders take less time. The hardest part of the project was finding someone to do the computer work and finding a way to print a 34.5" picture.

A teacher, who teaches computer graphics, at the high school happened to have everything that I needed and actually wanted to do it! What a relief! It takes



many, many hours of computer work!!! She said that she will not do it again!

*Linda Matthews, President*

Our best money making project has been brand afghans that we have been selling for several years. They feature the Wyoming bucking horse in the center so we had to have them approved by the state and they carry a hang tag that marks them as a licensed product. About 100 brands surround the bucking horse. We charged those who wanted their brand on the afghan. Afghans came in brown, black, dark green, cranberry,

blue, and bright red. We have only green, blue, and bright red remaining. In fact we are almost out of afghans and we are beginning the search for a new product that will sell to locals and tourists.

The company we used was called Pure Country in North Carolina. The toll free number is 800-344-3188. The afghans were woven in the US which we felt was a "plus" and the company was good to work with us. They were a very popular item for graduation

and wedding gifts.

We also sell a cookbook with over 900 recipes from all categories but it features a large beef section. The cookbook cover features brands and folds to make an easel. The company we worked with was Jumbo Jack's Cookbooks in Audubon, Iowa. Website: [jumbojacks.com](http://jumbojacks.com), phone: 800-798-2635. They were also good to work with.

We also have napkins but the company that we worked with in Denver has gone out of business. We

are almost out of napkins so we are searching for a new company to work with. While the napkins are popular with members and people often request them for special dinners, we find that they do not make a lot of money. They are too expensive for our restaurants to use and mostly people ask us to donate them for special events.

I am eager to see what other groups are doing! Happy Valentines to you!

*Nancy Darnell*

## Lander Valley CattleWomen

Mugs from:

Darts Custom Imprinting

P.O. Box 220

Henderson, NE 68371

We talk to Ruby. Her phone is (402) 723-5395

Aprons come from: Mark II Monogramming

411 Lincoln St.

Lander, WY 82520

We talk to Sharon. Her phone # is (307) 349-0009

Aprons have an adjustable neck strap.

In response to ordering properties with brands, we work with a lot of local printing companies, and have had good luck.

We use Lincoln Printing of Laramie for napkins, Brown and Gold for brands on sweatshirts, t-shirts and scarves.

We used Pioneer Printing in Cheyenne for printing of our cookbook and Cowbells Ring School Bells.

Our last mug was printed by Nicky and Sabrina from Zazzle.com, of which you can go on line to get the information. Hope this information will help in some way.

*Rita Parker*

Several county groups including Natrona, Fremont, Cody and Washakie use a Worland based company to design and arrange for printing napkins. They cost 7+ cents, but are very nice. All these paper products have increased in price. Jeff Lee, 124 S. 8th St, Worland, WY 82401 [serlkay@rtconnect.net](mailto:serlkay@rtconnect.net) 1-800-894-4037

## Niobrara CattleWomen Fund Raising Products

**License Plate Holders:** Top says "Wyoming Beef," bottom says "It's What's for Dinner"

The lady we ordered the license plate holders from is: Marsha S. Harris--Newton Manufacturing Co. Denver, CO 80237

303-770-2987 - Fax 303-770-2989

EMAIL: [MarshHarris1@aol.com](mailto:MarshHarris1@aol.com)

[www.newtonmfg.com](http://www.newtonmfg.com)

We have several of these on hand. If anyone would like to buy 1 we can ship it to them @ \$5.00 plus postage. If a group would like to buy 10, 20, 30, or so I could sell the holders to them at cost of \$4.31 plus shipping.....It is not a big money maker, but around here, we felt that \$5.00 was as high as we could sell at an easy price to remember... Barb DeGering, 307-334-2167

**Brand Napkins:** They held a contest, and sent the artwork chosen plus each brand on an index card, and the napkin company did the design. Goshen County used the same company. You might want to ask for samples of paper ply and quality choices. They used 2-ply, and they were 4+ cents per napkin. Sell 375 napkins/\$25, 100/\$8. Excellent company to work with. Donna Hanson, 307-334-3357 Attn: Karen

Coren Printing Inc  
631 Birch St Suite A  
Windsor, CO 80550  
970-686-9631

**Calendar:** The extra artwork entered in the contest for the brand napkin was used to make a calendar with a rope border around the picture, credit to artist and a regular calendar page. These sold for \$10.

**Brand Book:** Local ranchers were invited to submit their brand, stories of their brand history, ranch, family or whatever they wanted to include, plus pictures. They have a brand wall at their fairgrounds hall. There is a fee to have your brand and story included which, along with the sale of the book, supports their scholarships. It is a history book, is bound like a paperback and was a two year project.

*Barb DeGering*

## COOL's Stalled Final Rule has Potential Implications for Livestock Producers

By Cari Rincker, Esq. Associate Attorney Budd-Falen Law Offices, L.L.C.

The Agriculture Marketing Service (AMS) published the final rule for mandatory country of origin labeling (COOL) in the Federal Register on Jan. 15, 2009.

Although COOL's final rule was originally scheduled to go into effect 60 days from its publication in the Federal Register, according to Bloomberg News, President Obama has put a freeze on several regulations of the former Bush Administration, including COOL, to ensure that his newly appointed Secretary of Agriculture, Tom Vilsack and his administration have a chance to review the final rule before it goes into full force and effect. Since President Bush signed the Food, Conservation and Energy Act of 2008 (containing the 2008 Farm Bill), which implemented mandatory COOL for the first time, President Obama cannot veto the Act. However, the Obama Administration has the power to review and perhaps change COOL regulations so long as the regulations enforce the intent of Congress as set forth in the legislation. It is also possible that the AMS will re-open the COOL regulations for additional public comment.

The heart and soul of COOL, as stated by Congress, includes which commodities would be covered, the exemption with processed foods and food service establishments, and record keeping requirements. For example, the Act requires that records be maintained "in the course of the normal conduct of the business of such person, including animal health papers, import or customs documents, or producer affidavits, may serve as such verification." Thus, some of the issues that the Obama Administration could adjust include the requirement for record keeping and producer affidavits.

Since the interim final rule became effective on Sept. 30, 2008, the U.S. has already experienced some effects with trade, especially with our North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) counter-parts. According to the Associated Press, on Dec. 1, 2008,

Canada filed a complaint before the World Trade Organization's (WTO) Dispute Settlement Body in Geneva, Switzerland over COOL. Subsequently, Mexico joined Canada in its complaint against the United States. In a written announcement, Canadian Trade Minister Stockwell Day stated that "[t]he country of origin legislation is creating undue trade restrictions to the detriment of Canadian exporters." Canada's complaint asserts that COOL inflicts unnecessary costs on meat packers using animals derived from Canada. Canada fears that other countries may follow the United States' lead on COOL and implement even greater restrictions for labeling. Absent an appeal, it could take a year before the COOL conflict will be resolved. As a member of the WTO, the U.S. government may be forced to make changes in COOL to comply with international trade treaties or be punished by way of monetary penalties or trade restrictions if violations are found to occur. Since the publication of COOL's final rule, livestock commodity groups in both Canada and Mexico remain opposed to mandatory COOL.

We know very little about Secretary Vilsack's views on COOL. Due to this conflict with our NAFTA partners, it is possible that the Obama Administration will adjust COOL's final rule to mitigate the alleged harm to Canada and Mexico. Additionally, in this tough economic time with an escalating national deficit, the Vilsack administration may feel that it is not the time to add increased expenses to agriculture businesses.

According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), COOL's record-keeping burden alone is estimated to cost \$641 million for all covered com-



modities with another \$2.6 billion to fully implement COOL among all segments of agriculture industries.

With that being said, the minor changes between the interim final rule and the final rule do not significantly affect livestock producers. In many cases, the AMS more carefully defined various terms such as removing "beef patties" from its definition of ground beef. Additionally, the connector terms "or," "and/or," and "may contain" between or among countries

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will no longer be used. Instead each country, or possible countries, will be listed. AMS believed that these terms inflicted confusion among consumers. For example, previously if it was unknown if a livestock animal was born and raised in Canada or Mexico but was harvested in the U.S., the meat product could have been labeled "Product of U.S., Canada or Mexico."

Furthermore, the final rule requires more specific information on the label such as identifying the country where the animal was processed to increase consumer clarification (e.g., "Processed in the United States"). These minor adjustments will not directly impact livestock producers but may increase consumer confidence over the long haul.

As previously mentioned, the final rule is still vague on what records livestock producers are required to maintain. The AMS stated in its final version of the rule that producers only need to keep records normally kept in the ordinary course of business.

However, the final rule specifies that such records must be produced within *five* business days upon an audit from the USDA. Due to this time limitation, it remains critical for livestock producers to be organized in their record keeping so that they can quickly and accurately respond to the government's request. At this point, AMS has not promulgated an exception to this record-keeping burden for those impacted by an Act of God; therefore, livestock producers should protect production records from fire, flood, or other kinds of natural disasters.

One last minor clarification in regard to producer affidavits—the AMS has now clarified how livestock producers are to handle those animals with unknown origins. "In the case of cattle, producer affidavits may be based on visual inspection of the animal to verify its origin." See AMS, County of Origin Labeling, Frequently Asked Questions dated Jan. 12, 2009. If a livestock producer decides to feed out an animal of unknown origin, livestock producers are able to *presume U.S. origin* so long as there are no markings or other means of identification that would indicate that the animal is of foreign origin. This rule only applies to livestock producers since "meat packers are not permitted to use visual inspection for origin verification."

Overall, the AMS's final rule on COOL contains few changes from the interim rule that would directly impact livestock producers. Currently, the wild card at the table is how the new Obama Administration will handle to current NAFTA trade controversy before the WTO and what changes, if any, will be made to COOL's final rule before it will go into effect.

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